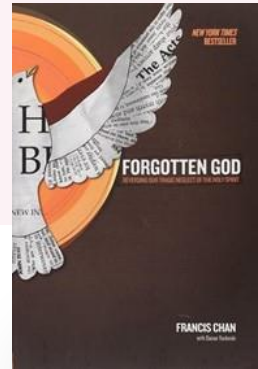




LEADER'S GUIDE

FORGOTTEN GOD BY FRANCIS CHAN



"From my perspective, the Holy Spirit is tragically neglected and, for all practical purposes, forgotten."

FRANCIS CHAN

THEMES

Spirit-filled Living

Theology

Body of Christ

Sin

Relationship

BOOK SUMMARY

Francis shares with us his journey to discovering the Holy Spirit. Compelled by his love for the church, his brothers and sisters in Christ, his heart for the lost, and most importantly, his deep love for, and desire to know, the Spirit of God.

Francis' first appeal to us is to recognise the neglect of the Holy Spirit in modern western culture within the body of believers. He emphasises this by pointing out the 'normalcy' and lack of fruit in many Christian lives, directing us to the discrepancy between the theology we know and the theological integrity of how we live our lives as Christians.

Throughout the book, Francis explores the fundamental knowledge most of us have about the Holy Spirit, delves into key scriptures about the Holy Spirit, and addresses common misconceptions, abuses, or fears we may unknowingly have towards the Spirit of God.

Francis moves on to explore practical ways of inviting the Spirit into our day to day lives as he prompts us to maintain steady fellowship with Him. We are reminded of the wisdom and power available to us through the Spirit's presence in our bodies, as well as the right way to seek more, through prayer, from the Spirit earnestly.

Finally, Francis endows to us helpful ways to remember the *Forgotten God* so that our lives may be totally and radically transformed. While displaying the fruit of the Spirit benefits us immeasurably, most importantly, it produces a life that is the cause of great astonishment to those around us, who recognise we do indeed radiate the presence of Jesus.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS



1

Q. Do you agree with Francis that the Holy Spirit is the Forgotten God? Why is the presence of the Holy Spirit essential to us as individuals, but also corporately in our churches?

TALKING POINTS

In the Western hemisphere, the Holy Spirit seems to be missing from many of our churches;

- We sense that 'something' is missing from our churches, but we are really missing 'someone' (the Spirit).
- Without the presence of the Spirit, we are unable to live transformed and fruit-filled lives; our lives essentially look the same as an unbeliever and do not shine the light of Jesus to a desperate world.
- As Christians, our lives should be Spirit-filled to be attractive to others, so much so that they deeply desire what we have for themselves.
- As Christians, we represent Jesus to others whether we are being transformed into His likeness or not, and if we are not abiding in Him and living in a worldly fashion, we are likely representing Him poorly.
- "But when believers live in the power of the Spirit, the evidence in their lives is supernatural. The church cannot help but be different, and the world cannot help but notice" (p17)
- "The church was powerful and spreading like wildfire, not because of clever planning, but by a movement of the Spirit." (p155)
- When we see churches led by the Spirit, we witness rapid growth and souls saved; we witness the lives of the church members transformed and often see miracles such as spiritual, emotional, and physical healings taking place.

Many believe the Holy Spirit is alive and active in parts of the globe such as Africa, South America, and Asia (p17).

2

Q. Jesus says to his disciples, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" John 16:7. Would you have preferred the presence of Jesus in the flesh over the presence of the Holy Spirit before reading this book? How have your views changed?

TALKING POINTS

- The Holy Spirit dwells IN us (p74);
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to turn from our sinful nature and pursue holiness.
- The Holy Spirit produces fruit in our lives.
- The Holy Spirit is the perfecter of our faith.
- The Holy Spirit prays and intercedes on our behalf.

Although many of us might feel it would be better to have the tangible human Jesus by our side guiding us, the Bible is clear that we are blessed abundantly and better off with the Holy Spirit.

3

Q. Can you think of a person in your life who displays the fruit of the Spirit profoundly? How does this person encourage you?

TALKING POINTS

Francis shares brief testimonies from many of his cherished Christian friends, all of which display incredible faith despite their circumstances.

Encourage everyone to share about a person who may have inspired them in their faith journey through the presence of the Holy Spirit tangible in their lives. Alternatively, you may like to discuss some of the stories shared by Francis;

- Joni Eareckson Tada (p39)
- Domingo and Irene Garcia (p59)
- Francis Schaeffer (p79)
- Esther Ann Kim (p97)
- Thomas and Jen Yun (p115)
- Dave Phillips (p135)

4

Q. Francis says, "Receiving freedom and healing in answer to prayer is generally not something that is done to you, a situation in which you are just a passive participant. Occasionally God works this way and simply heals or frees a person outright... But in my experience, He typically asks us to play an active role in the journey towards wholeness" (p129).

Is there an area in your life where you require healing or the to Spirit to intervene and break the cycle of sin? If you are comfortable, share with the group.

TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

Healing for;

- Abuse (verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual)
- Betrayal or infidelity
- Broken relationships
- Divorce

Freedom from things such as;

- Addictions (drugs, alcohol, pornography)
- Sexual immortality
- Inappropriate media (music, movies, television)
- Materialism/consumerism
- Idols (anything taking God's place in your heart)
- Unforgiveness
- Lying, bitterness, jealousy
- Theft
- Debt or overspending
- Gluttony or an unhealthy relationship with food

It is a difficult thing to admit wrongdoing in front of others. It may be helpful first to share a story of your own and remind the women that whatever is said at the group is confidential. In sharing our

struggles we are more likely to succeed through accountability. You may like to suggest pairing off for privacy if the women would be more comfortable.

5

Q. When you are studying the Bible, do you tend to take the *Exegesis* or *Eisegesis* approach? What are the dangers of using the wrong approach?

TALKING POINTS

Eisegesis means to import a subjective or preconceived meaning into the text (p23);

- Begin with an idea or conviction and then search for verses in the Bible to prove your point.
- We can take verses out of context to support almost any point of view.
- This style of interpretation has been used to justify sin, greed, lust, divorce, etc.
- Cults use this method to justify their beliefs.

Exegesis is an attempt to discover the meaning of the text objectively, starting with the text and moving out from there (p 23-24);

- Begin with the word of God, ask the Spirit for clarity, study to see what the text actually says.
- Exegesis means 'to lead out' (draw out the meaning).

6

Q. There has been much theological and experiential debate about the Holy Spirit, and how He comes to dwell in us. Francis reminds us that despite what we may believe about this, the Bible tells us to repent, be baptised and receive the Spirit. (p69). Can you share a time in your life when you have had a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit? It may be the first time you received Him and felt his presence, or perhaps it was during the mundane activities of everyday life as He provided you with His guiding counsel and comfort.

TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- The moment I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour.
- When I was baptised.
- During a difficult trial or season.
- While being convicted of sin.
- During prayer.
- While believing for a miraculous healing (emotional, spiritual, or physical).
- While evangelising, teaching, or preaching.
- While counselling another believer in need.
- During daily struggles such as parenting, being a wife, peace keeping between family members and so on.

7

Q. What was your response to Francis's question, "Why do you want to stay on this Earth?" (p84).

TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- For the common good I can do.
- A desire to see more lost souls saved and to evangelise.
- To complete the task the Lord has set before me.

- For my family or children.
- To enjoy all the beautiful things in the world.
- Because I am fearful of death/I am not ready to die.
- I like my life and am enjoying being here.

Although Francis outlines the "right reasons" (p85), it is important to remember every woman is on her own journey with the Lord. Those who are not as spiritually mature may not understand/or have a deep desire for Jesus to return; this could be because of fear, mistrust, a lack of knowledge or understanding.

If you have time, you may like to discuss Paul's comments in Philippians 1:21-24; "For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I can live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live."

8

Q. Do you agree with Francis that "greater knowledge does not necessarily equal greater spirituality"? (p157)

TALKING POINTS

- Knowledge can lead to greater intimacy and a deeper relationship with God, but this is not an automatic effect (p157).
- Trusting God when He says no and being obedient to Him comes through relationship, not necessarily head knowledge (p49).
- The Pharisees and Sadducees were 'experts' of the law, yet their hearts were far from God.

Greater spirituality (or faith) comes from a relationship with God. God first desires a relationship with us; we can come to Him just as we are in all our sin, brokenness, and shame. Through relationship, our love for Him, trust in Him, and knowledge of Him grows. His Spirit to dwell in us, resulting in willing obedience. Through this obedience, we are transformed into the likeness of Christ and produce fruits of the Spirit, along with good works.

9

Q. "Do you believe you exist not for your own pleasure but to help people know the love of Jesus and to come fully alive in Him? If so, then that will shape how you live your life in the place where you are" (p92). What specific activities, ministries, or good works does the Spirit have you doing right now, specific to location and those around you?

TALKING POINTS

Activities, ministries, and serving areas could include;

- Serving at my local church (welcome team, small group leader, kids church, worship team).
- Volunteering for a not-for-profit organisation.
- Common good works (assisting elderly family or neighbours, providing hospitality in your home or dropping meals to those who are sick, providing childcare for a single mum).
- Sponsoring children or donating to various causes.

Potential causes for not participating in regular 'good works';

- Experiencing a crisis (family death, relationship breakdown, addictions, trauma, health issue).
- Welcoming a new baby to the family.
- Burn out or focusing on self-care to get well.

- Too busy with other things.
- Unsure where to serve or what to do.
- No desire to serve, volunteer, or help anywhere.

Things to remember;

- The Lord may ask us to forgo good things so we can do the right things for His glory (p126).
- It is possible to do too many things, and for the wrong reasons. We need to be serving out of love, not guilt or stress (p104).
- Our lives may simply be too loud to hear the Spirit prompting us to stop, help, serve or use our gifts to bless another (p108).
- If someone is unsure about their gifting's, ask the group to suggest possible options. Draw out the individuals qualities and use this as a starting point to suggest an area that might fit well for them. (For example, if they are wonderful with children, perhaps kids ministry might be a good place to start).
- If someone does not have a desire to serve, ask the Spirit to intervene. Perhaps they feel burnt out, used, or have tried to help before, and it ended poorly. Ask the Spirit to provide them with a desire to, and a way, to bless and serve others.

10

Q. In 'The Final Biography', Francis asks us to consider the following questions; "What if this last biography were about your life? What would be written here? Would we read stories about the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit or stories about what you have accomplished on your own?" (p159). Have you decided to be led by the Spirit?

TALKING POINTS

Take this opportunity to share authentically and consider what the answer to this challenging question might be for each woman present.

Finish in prayer; pray in faith, asking God to pour His Spirit afresh into each woman's life, for hearts to be open and convicted of sin - and empowered by the Spirit to repent and turn back to God. Pray for continued transformation, for emotional and spiritual healing, and that the lives of the women present will ultimately become a biography that displays the Spirit's power, lifting up the name of Jesus and giving all glory to God the Father.



ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR LEADERS

If you would like to continue your study of *Forgotten God*, you can purchase the workbook here; https://www.koorong.com/product/remembering-the-forgotten-god-workbook-francis-chan_9781434700889

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